

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN ST. LOUIS WINS NATION'S HIGHEST HONOR AS THE 'PROJECT THAT BEST EXEMPLIFIES ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE'

NEW ORLEANS, May 23 /PRNewswire/ -- The MetroLink transit system in St. Louis, hailed by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena as "the best new light rail system in the country," today received the nation's highest honor for engineering excellence. From the most innovative projects and those of greatest service to clients, the American Consulting Engineers Council (ACEC) chose MetroLink for its Grand Conceptor. The award was presented at the ACEC national convention.

Douglas Campion, transit principal for Sverdrup Corporation, and John K. Leary, Jr., executive director of the Bi-State Development Agency, which operates MetroLink, accepted the award for "the project that best exemplifies engineering excellence."

Winning the Grand Conceptor were Sverdrup Corporation, the project management consultant for planning, design and construction of the 17-mile, 19-station system, and two facilities engineering consultants-- Booker Associates, Inc. and Kuhlmann Design Group, Inc. They were honored for helping MetroLink establish new national measures of success. costs were below most light rail systems and ridership exceeded even the most optimistic forecasts. Cited for excellence were:

\* The adaptive re-use of idle railroad property for 14 of the system's 17 miles. This use of existing infrastructure and its preliminary re-engineering by Sverdrup into a state-of-the-art transit system cut program costs by an estimated \$100 million.

\* The first light rail station to be located inside a major airport terminal. Sverdrup and Booker Associates designed a 4,023-foot- long bridge adjacent to a concourse, and Booker designed three bridges that weave through the interchange of two nearby interstate highways to bring the system onto airport property.

\* Rehabilitation of Eads Bridge, the first major crossing of the Mississippi River, and a 19th-century tunnel under the business district. Based on Sverdrup's preliminary analysis and the Kuhlmann Design Group's final design, the renewed facilities carried MetroLink through the heart of St. Louis without disrupting traffic and at a fraction of the cost of new facilities.

MetroLink, including track and facilities, 31 light rail vehicles, a storage yard and maintenance facility, train controls, and electrification, cost \$348 million. At \$19.8 million per mile, it is one of the least expensive in the



nation. It was projected to carry 12,000 passengers per day when it opened in July 1993, and grow to 17,000 after a year. Actual results averaged 26,000 per day. The first-year forecast was for 4.8 million passengers, but it carried more than nine million.

After touring the completed system, Transportation Secretary Pena said, "St. Louis has the best new light rail system in the country. To the many cities who want light rail, I tell them to contact St. Louis and see how they did it. "

The Grand Conceptor is the highest award given to U.S. firms by the engineering profession. With this year's award, Sverdrup achieves a unique distinction among the 4,500 engineering firms in the ACEC. It is the only four-time winner of the Grand Conceptor.

Sverdrup won previously for the I-205 Columbia River Bridge at Portland, Oregon, the first in a new generation of large-scale segmental concrete bridges; the West Coast launch complex for the Space Shuttle, described by Time as "the most sophisticated military complex ever built"; an the eight-lane I-95 Fort McHenry Tunnel beneath Baltimore Harbor, the nation's widest underwater tunnel and largest project in the Interstate Highway System.

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